

## Chapter 55

Elizabeth stood beside Julian, her mind was racing so fast. Her lips trembled, but after thinking it through, she leaned in and whispered to Julian, "We can't lose both. It's better to be dropped from the Stallion Night VIP membership than to be sued and dragged by the media."

Julian nodded slowly. The thought of losing both reputation and his remaining money made his head ache. He clenched his fists, his eyes turning red, but he forced himself to speak. "Fine," he growled, turning to Philip. "I agree to the terms."

Philip raised a brow. "Good! but there's one more thing.. Before transferring the money, you still need to publicly apologize to the lady you slapped."

Julian's eyes widened. "What? Never!" he snapped. "I'm not going to stand here and humiliate myself over just a slap, it was nothing!"

Philip's face hardened instantly. "Did you say just a slap?" He stepped closer to cover the gap between himself and Julian. "Maybe you should keep your money then, and we'll see how 'just a slap' looks in court."

Julian froze and his body stiffened in fear. A slight tremble started in his hands, and a bead of sweat rolled down the side of his face. Elizabeth gave him a subtle nudge from behind.

"Julian," she muttered under her breath. "Apologize now.... You don't have a choice."

Julian swallowed the lump in his throat. Turning toward the reporter, he muttered, "I'm sorry."

The girl narrowed her eyes. "I didn't hear you..."

Julian shut his eyes tightly, grinding his teeth. Then, with great difficulty, he said again, louder this time, "I apologize for slapping you, I was wrong."

The girl nodded. "Thank you," she said, pulling out her phone, she showed him her account details, and read the numbers out loud.

Everyone stood still, watching as Julian slowly keyed the account number into his banking app. His fingers trembled as he pressed the 'send' button.

"Transaction complete," he muttered bitterly.

The young reporter's eyes widened as her phone pinged. When she saw the credit alert, her jaw dropped. "Oh my God," she whispered. Then louder, "Thank you! Thank you so much!"

She turned to Ryan, smiling brightly. "Thank you for making this happen, Mr. Walker. You have no idea what this means to me."

She leaned forward and hugged him tightly. The crowd, moved by the gesture, erupted into a round of applause. Some whispered among themselves...

"Maybe he's not rich, but he's got a heart of gold."

Elizabeth frowned, her heart boiling with jealousy. She stormed forward, her heels were clacking loudly against the floor, and she came to stand before Ryan and Claudia.

Her eyes swept over Claudia from head to toe, like Claudia was suddenly something rotten. She folded her arms in disgust, glaring at Ryan.

"I don't know how you're pulling all of this off," Elizabeth said coldly. "But I know Claudia is helping you behind the scenes. That's the only

explanation for all this sudden importance."

Claudia raised a brow. "Excuse me?"

Elizabeth scoffed. "You must be bribing everyone... Philip, the security, even the press to make it look like Ryan is important. But let me tell you something..." she leaned in, lowering her voice and her voice turned ice cold. "No matter how much money you throw around, Claudia, you can't bribe me and Julian."

Ryan tilted his head as he seemed amused.

Elizabeth wasn't finished continued, "And for making Mr. Philip throw my parents out of the seat that rightfully belonged to them... oh, Ryan, you are going to regret this. You will see the wrath of the McCarthys. You'll wish you never stepped foot in this hall."

Julian stepped forward to back her up, his frustration was so obvious everyone could see he would throw a punch at Ryan if he was permitted. He slammed his fist down on the table where Ryan was seated, rattling the glasses.

"Also," he growled, "we still had one more bet. But that bet has to be cancelled."

Ryan looked at him with a raised brow, confused. "Cancelled? What are you talking about?"

Julian wiped sweat from his brow before saying his next words. "It's obvious now! Claudia helped you rig what was supposed to be a fair bet. If you could get the golden seat then obviously, you could win the golden award too. You cheated, you son of a b...." He controlled his words.

"I didn't cheat," Ryan replied calmly. "And Claudia had no hand in

anything. The board made its decisions."

Elizabeth cut in immediately, "Lies! You two plotted this! You bribed your way here. There's no way someone like you could just walk in and be seated in the golden VIP seat unless you had help."

Claudia stood up immediately due to how intense the accusations were. "First of all, Elizabeth, I wasn't even invited to this event. I told the board I wouldn't be attending due to my tight schedule. My appearance tonight was a surprise to everyone... including Philip."

Philip nodded in agreement. "She's telling the truth. Claudia's attendance wasn't on our guest list."

"So explain this!" Elizabeth demanded, pointing to Ryan.

Philip raised a hand. "That's enough! Both of you, listen carefully, accusing the board of bribery or misconduct is a serious offense, be very careful with your words."

Julian and Elizabeth fell silent, their faces became dark and tense.

Philip added sternly, "If you have any further issues, I suggest you take it up with the organizers in private. Don't cause any more embarrassment tonight, you've done enough."

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